

GRANTEE MONITORING

Grantee Name	Birthline Inc.
Location/Address	1411 West Saint Germain Street Suite 5, St. Cloud, MN 56301
Date and Location of Site Visit	October 11, 2017, at Birthline's office.
Grantee Participants	Tammy Lindell: Executive Director
MDH Participant(s)	Mary Ottman: Positive Alternatives Grant Manager
Grant Agreement #/PO #	285529

PURPOSE:

In accordance with the MDH Policy 238.01 Grantee Monitoring, MDH will conduct at least one monitoring visit per grant period on all state grants of over \$50,000, and at least annual monitoring visits on grants of over \$250,000.

The purpose of the grant monitoring visit is to review and ensure progress against the grants' goals, to address any problems or issues before the end of the grant period and to build rapport between the state agency and the grantees. This visit may cover topics such as statutory compliance; challenges faced by the grantee, modifications made to the grant program, program outcomes, grantee policies and procedures, grantee governance, and training and technical assistance needs.

The findings or information obtained through this monitoring activity will be used:

- To ascertain how MDH program funds are being utilized
- To provide targeted technical assistance needs
- To improve program implementation performance
- To suggest other training needs
- In future funding decisions

OVERVIEW

1. Is the Grantee's non-profit 501(c) 3 status current?

Yes. Birthline Inc. 501(c)3 status is current

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2. Does the Grantee have a central file containing the official records for this grant agreement and/or amendment?

Yes

3. Where is this central file located?

The file is located in the Director's office.

4. Who is responsible for this central file?

The Executive Director is responsible for the file.

5. Does the central file include

- The grant proposal? **Yes**
- The award letter? **Yes**
- The signed grant agreement and any/all amendments? **Yes**
- Any/all requests and/or approvals for scope/budget changes? **Yes**
- The work plan? **Yes**
- Any/all payment requests (invoices)? **Yes**
- Any/all signed subcontracts? Not applicable (no subcontracts) **NA**
- Any/all Progress Reports? **Yes**

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Does the organization meet all reporting requirements as outlined in the grant agreement and/or amendment?

Yes, Birthline meets the reporting requirements as outlined in the grant agreement.

2. Are expenditure reports submitted timely and accurately?

Yes, Birthline submits timely and accurately expenditure reports.

3. Are progress reports submitted with all required information and in a timely manner?

Yes, all reports are submitted with the required information and in a timely manner.

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CONTRACTUAL

1. Does the Grantee have written policies or procedures addressing use of contractors and/or subcontractors?

Birthline does not have written policies or procedures as Birthline does not use any contractors and/or subcontractors.

2. Were any sub-contractors paid from the MDH grant required to sign a contractual agreement outlining services to be rendered, duration of engagement, and pay rate?

NA

3. Was the contractual agreement(s) reviewed and approved by MDH before implementation?

NA

PERSONNEL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES OF THE GRANTEE

1. Are time distribution records (e.g., time-sheets) maintained to show how employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind to, the MDH grant and who work on multiple projects/programs spend their time?

Yes, Birthline has time-sheets that have a breakdown of hours worked as it relates to the grant funded positions.

2. Do personnel and/or payroll records show dates of hire/termination, immigration status if applicable, actual hours of time worked, leave time, federal and state programs worked on, and earning for all employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind, to the MDH grant?

Yes, Birthline personnel and payroll records indicate hours worked and earnings for employees covered by the grant. Birthline utilizes payroll services of Miller, Welle, Heiser, & Co. LTD. Located in St. Cloud.

3. Does the Grantee have policies and procedures in writing regarding:

- Payroll?
- Travel?
- Overtime?

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- Timesheets?
- Taxes?
- Purchasing?
- Compensated time off?

Yes, Birthline maintains Organizational Policies and Procedures addressing the above areas.

4. Are employees time sheets approved?

By whom (what position)? **The Senior Administrative Lead, (Natalie Ethan) reviews all timesheets and checks for mathematical accuracy, and then gives them to Executive Director for final approval.**

By the Executive Director? **The Executive Director, Tammy Lindell, does an additional review for accuracy and then gives the final approval and submits time sheets to accounting firm.**

5. Does the Grantee's payroll preparation and distribution involve more than one employee?

Yes, as stated above. Birthline's Senior Administrative Lead reviews and checks all time sheets for numerical accuracy prior to forwarding them to Birthline's Executive Director for approval. The Executive Director reviews all timesheets and signs them once they are accurate and submits to Mille, Welle, Hieser for payroll services for the processing of payroll.

6. Does an authorized official approve all checks before being signed?

The Executive Director officially approves all checks and payroll is submitted through electronic deposit.

Additional Comments:

Birthline has had a new Director as of January 1, 2017. Tammy Lindell was interim when the former Director of 9 years resigned. There was another Director, Mike Stalboerger the first 6 months of this 3 year grant cycle. Birthline's Stepping Stones, earn while you learn program staff are in transition as well. There are two new staff currently being trained due to one Stepping Stones staff relocating and the other staff is expecting a child in January 2018. The two new staff, Amanda Roe and Cheryl Curran, are doing very well and liking working with clients. The Client Advocate was recently trained and certified to do ultrasounds.

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PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

Please use this space to answer all questions.

Program History

- When was your program started? Why was it started?
Birthline began as an organization in 1972 and was originally formed under a Birthright charter. Early in the 1980's the organization went independent, changing the name to Birthline Inc. Birthline's Stepping Stone's program began in 2003 as a means to provide resources, education, and support to those faced with an unintended or crisis pregnancy. The primary goal of the program is to ensure that all women are given the opportunity to achieve the services necessary to carry their pregnancy to term and care for their infant. In 2017, Life Coaching was added to our services in order to help clients set and achieve goals in order to help facilitate them in continuing to become self-sufficient as part of the Stepping Stone's earn while you learn program.
- What need does your program fulfill?
Stepping Stones and Client Advocacy programs fulfill basic needs for pregnant women, expecting fathers and their children. Through program support, education, resources, coaching, goal setting, and accomplishments, these clients are able to earn basic necessities for their baby and/or self. Examples: Diapers, car seats, pack-n-plays, gas cards, bus cards, breastfeeding supplies. These clients would not be served in this capacity anywhere else in our area. It provides the necessary support to help facilitate each individual meet core basic needs when faced with an unintended pregnancy.
- How has the program grown or changed since its beginning? The Stepping Stones and Client Advocacy programs have changed and continue to change based on needs of Birthline clients. Birthline provides a telephone number for clients to text instead of call in order to stay current with this generation's means and preference of communication. This program has grown in providing basic life skills and baby basic classes. Relationship coaching and education on how to have healthy relationships have been added, along with Life Coaching sessions for individuals seeking more direction and accountability. There are work stations for clients to utilize in order to go online to search for employment, watch educational videos, and apply for financial/medical, childcare assistance. Birthline has also experienced an increase in mental health challenges as well as increased numbers of issues related to substance abuse during pregnancy. This program is client based, meaning each individual customizes their experience based on current needs.

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Grantee's Target population

- Who does the organization primarily serve?
Birthline's clientele consists of individuals who are faced with an unintended pregnancy to infants 6 months or younger, and services continue until the child is 1 year of age. Expectant fathers as well as fathers of infants 6 months old or younger can also participate as a client or along with the mother as long as the relationship is identified as safe and supportive.
- What is the program's demographic and geographic coverage?
Geographically, Birthline serves Central Minnesota and generally within one-hour radius of the St. Cloud metro area. Majority come from Stearns, Benton, and Sherburne counties; with the remaining from Wright, Morrison, Mille Lacs, and other central MN locations.
Review recent Demographic reporting.
From January 1, to June 30, 2017, and out of 171 clients being serviced:
Age Range: 7% were 15-17 years of age, 10% were 18-19 years of age, 26% were 20-24 years of age, 32% were 25-29 years of age, 16% were 30-34 years of age and 6% were 35+.
Pregnancy Status: 20% were in their first trimester, 42% were in their 2nd trimester, 22% were in their 3rd trimester, 8% were postpartum, 2% the pregnancy status was unknown and 5% were fathers.
Additional Statistics: 60% of clients that came for services were 20-29 years of age. 20% were younger and 20% were older. In addition, 84% of the clients were not married. 95% were mothers and 5% the fathers. According to the race ethnicity, 59% were white, 12% were African American, 11% Other/Multi Race, 9% were African American, 5% American Indian, 3% Asian Pacific and 1% unknown.

Leadership and Governance

- Effective Board: How many board members currently serve, who are they?
Birthline is governed by a Board of 10 members currently but bylaws state can have up to 12 members. Membership consists of representatives from the medical profession, education and business community, and other stake holders. Elisa Schneider (President), George Sjogren (Vice President), Michael Stalboerger (Treasurer), Peg

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Imholte (Secretary), Rene Anderson, Nadine Pullis, Fr. Jerry Dalseth, Lynn Schnettler, Shelia Leavell, Elisa Schneider, Dr. Bob Stocker.

- How often do they meet? How are they informed of organization's progress and challenges?

The Board has recently changed to meeting quarterly and developed sub-committees that meet monthly. The sub-committees are, Executive Team, Marketing and Fund Development Team and Financial Oversight Team. At the Board meeting each Team Lead gives a report on the current status of the organization as a whole. Other means of communication are done through e-mail. The Executive Director communicates with the Board President on a bi-weekly basis to assess current needs. In addition, there are non-voting advisory members that continue on the board to further obtain guidance and support when needed in specific areas.

- How supportive is the Board of the program?

The Board of Directors is very supportive of the Stepping Stones program and is active in donating to the program personally.

- How is the program staffed? Who is responsible for the supervision of grant staff?

The Stepping Stones program consists of two part-time staff. Currently, Stepping Stones has two new part-time staff being trained in by Jolene Theis, before going on maternity leave. Jolene is expecting a baby in January and plans to stay home. She has agreed to train new staff and be a resource until baby comes. Amanda Roe and Cheryl Curran are the new Stepping Stones Coordinators. Amanda Roe just finished school for Licensed Practical Nursing and Cheryl Curran has been working with teens and young adults for over 25 years and has run a MOPS (Mother of Preschoolers) group the past 23 years. The Director, Tammy Lindell is responsible for the supervision of the grant staff.

- How are staff evaluated on their performance? How long have PA staff been employed there? **Jolene Theis has been employed since September of 2012 and the new Stepping Stones staff have only been working for approximately 4 weeks. Staff are evaluated yearly on their performance with monthly check-ins.**
- How are staff background checks done? **Background checks are done upon hire and are completed through an outsource firm, hired to check background information.**
- What is your organization's policy on complaints for staff and clients? **Birthline staff and clients have the right to file a written complaint to the Executive Director. If the complaint involves said position, in that case the**

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complaint may be filed with the Board of Directors and submitted to the Board Chair. The complaint is reviewed and a response will be issued in writing within three business days of receiving the written complaint.

Budget

- Does the current budget reflect your work plan activities?
Yes, the current budget reflects work plan activities.
- Is the budget accurate for the project size/scope?
Yes, the current budget is accurate with the project size/scope.
- Do you have any challenges with the budget or invoicing?
No challenges with budget or invoicing.
- Has your Financial Reconciliation taken place?
No, a Financial Reconciliation has not taken place during this grant cycle.
- If you have an elevated risk designation, and/ or your Financial Reconciliation report cited any concerns, these will be discussed.
- **Birthline has a low risk designation based on their submitted Due Diligence form in their original application.**

Review Work Plan including:

Partners

- If applicable: how are people referred to the program? Are there any barriers encountered with referral sources? What is your most common referral source?
Referrals for the Stepping Stones programs typically come through other social service agencies, such as: other pregnancy centers, Public Health Nurses, Catholic Charities, youth workers, treatment centers, counties, domestic abuse centers, Sexual Assault Center or word of mouth from Doctors, Nurses, or other community member's. Barriers experienced are with organizations that do not support alternatives to abortion.
Challenges with partners or specific counties?
Birthline has a strong working relationship with area partners and counties, yet there has been a shift in timeframe in which referrals are received. Therefore, clients in their 2nd or 3rd trimester tend to continue being the latest client trend. This increases their drop-off rate once baby is born. Birthline has created a new brochure with current services that will be sent out to all local Social Service agencies. This brochure ties into

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the current brand and marketing plan for outreach. It will hopefully help the community connect with our services and our service to this community.

Work Plan

- Review your 2016 – 19 grant application's description of the program you are asking to be funded. On your work plan note the services and activities you said you would provide and the number of clients you would serve.
- **Prepare a short summary of your current program(s) and the number of clients being served.** How does what you describe in the application compare with what you are currently providing? Have any programs and/or activities or services been added or removed? Have the number of clients being served per quarter decreased or increased since June 2016? Is there anything in particular you want to share about your current program to explain its current status?

Birthline is actively carrying out the work plan objectives on a daily basis within the program. We continue to provide education and hands on learning through the car seat safety program, safe sleep program, and other parenting educational activities such as but not limited to baby boot camp, childbirth education, doula services, and other case management services. Birthline also continues with healthy relationship education. One thing that is in its final stages is the Life Coaching Certification. The new Executive Director, formerly served as the Client Advocate, started the training initially in 2016 but once position shifted to Executive Director, the new Client Advocate Staff began training. Certification will be complete by November 1st, 2017.

- Do you anticipate making any changes to the 2017-18 Work Plan? If so, in what way and for what reasons?

Birthline does not anticipate making any changes at this time.

Participants:

- What type of outreach does the organization put into action? What is working well? What are more the challenging aspects to finding or retaining clients?

Birthline has been working on an effective marketing plan in order to reach underserved populations. Currently Birthline has two mall billboards, ran a radio campaign as students got back to college, continue being the host of the Young

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Parenting Program for Social Service agencies, has a new billboard in the community, a social media outreach campaign, and is looking into other resources and outreach avenues. Birthline currently presents in public schools and shares the information of Stepping Stones with approximately 1,500 students during the school year. Birthline created new brochures on services and current programs. Birthline continues to address the challenge of client no-shows. This is an on-going issue along with clients that struggle with commitment therefore do not finish program. In some incidences clients enter or leave treatment facilities for drugs and/or alcohol dependency. Birthline is looking into avenues of bringing services to the populations in order to better serve the community.

Data:

- How is program data collected and by whom? Is data collected useful to agency? **Birthline Stepping Stones Staff and Administrative Assistant collect and manage data. This is done through paperwork, classes, homework, and other ways clients are serviced. It is useful in seeing trends, balance our outreach, understand changes in trends or demographic.**
- Anything we can do to help or simplify data collection? **Birthline currently utilizes Ekyros for data collection.**

Review Evaluation

- Your 2015-16 Evaluation Report Summary will be discussed (If you were a past grantee).
- Your 2016-17 Evaluation Plan will be reviewed. Any suggestions provided in your 2015-16 Report Summary should be included in the plan, if you are continuing a similar evaluation. If you are planning a new evaluation, details will be discussed. Do you have any questions on your evaluation?
The Evaluation Report Summary was received and suggested changes are underway, can discuss further at site visit.

Miscellaneous

- Anything else you would like to share?
Birthline is looking at going medical and looking to develop a Stepping Stones curriculum for Somali speaking clients.
- Anything else we haven't asked?
Not at this time.

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What can we do to help?

- Trainings and Grantee meetings useful for grantee? Any topic suggestions? **Birthline would like to see training on how centers utilize the Life Coaching.**
- Feedback or suggestions for the state? **None at this time.**
- Is there any way MDH can assist you to better equip your success in the Positive Alternatives Grant Program? **Birthline appreciates the hard work of MDH and providing the opportunity to serve Central Minnesota in this capacity.**

Summary:

Birthline has been a long time Positive Alternatives (PA) grantee as an awardee of the grant program from the beginning of the first grant cycle in 2006. Currently Birthline has received grant funding for the following programming: outreach, car seat education and distribution, case management, crib education and distribution, education assistance, employment assistance, life skills education, material support, mental health support, pregnancy and parenting education, pregnancy testing and transportation assistance.

Birthline has experienced new changes with staff transitions in the last year. The organization has recently hired a new Executive Director (ED) and two new Stepping Stone staff. The new ED is a long-time staff member and also served as interim director. She has been able to receive ongoing mentorship and training from the long time former ED who has had substantial grant management experience with the Positive Alternatives (PA) grant program. New Stepping Stone staff have had the opportunity to receive training and direction from one of the staff who will be leaving when her baby is born. All staffing transitions have been handled seamlessly.

An Outreach and Education Director has recently been trained and certified in Sexual Risk Avoidance through *Ascend* and is now providing education to community schools and groups on a regular basis. Some staff are in the process of receiving their certification in Life Coaching and are excited to implement this type of valuable mentoring to clients on a full time basis. Also, the client services advocate was recently trained and certified to do ultrasounds. Birthline hopes to have their ultrasound program operational in 6 months or so.

Birthline is exploring the option of becoming an *Obria* affiliate to initiate providing full pregnancy medical clinic services for all clients. *Obria* offers a vision to provide patients a full scope of medical services serving women at any stage of their reproductive care. Birthline is looking into

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this expansion of services with *Obria* as they also have a model to provide Telemedicine and have built a foundation of the infrastructure for a nationwide telemedicine program that can be implemented at all affiliate sites. Staff and the board are still in the exploratory stages of discerning this affiliation for moving ahead with providing a more comprehensive approach for their community and clients. The site visit discussion on this topic included the impact of choosing this affiliation moving forward and its impact, if any, on the PA grant funding. The grant manager will look in to this situation further and get back to Birthline's ED.

The financial stability, the organizational structure including the strong and involved board of directors along with the new staff have continued to meet the responsibilities of their grant management. Staff changes have gone smoothly with old and new staff working together to accomplish this important transition.

I look forward to continuing to work alongside Birthline for the remainder of the PA grant cycle.

Date: October 16, 2017

Grant Manager: Mary Ottman